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SCHAKOWSKY HAILS PASSAGE OF STEM CELL RESEARCH BILL

CALLS FOR SPEEDY ENACTMENT OF LIFE-SAVING RESEARCH

WASHINGTON, DC - Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky (IL-09) today spoke in support of H.R. 810, the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act of 2005, which would lift restrictions on and provide federal funding for this breakthrough research. Before the House voted to pass H.R. 810, Congresswoman Schakowsky urged her colleagues to pass the bill and fund embryonic stem cell research in order to provide relief for the 128 million Americans who suffer from diseases which may be cured or abated by stem cell research.

The full text of Congresswoman Schakowsky's floor statement is below:

"Mr. Speaker, I stand today in strong support of H.R. 810, the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act of 2005. While the debate over whether federal funds should be used for research has demonstrated itself to be an extremely controversial subject here in Washington, it is clear that a majority of Americans strongly supports embryonic stem cell research. They want the federal government to fund research that is critical for some 128 million Americans who suffer from juvenile diabetes, Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, cancer, heart disease, spinal cord injury, ALS, and other diseases.

Stem cell research is a medical issue; one that should and does transcend political lines and instead focus on human lives. One such life is that of Clara Livingston, a nine-year old girl with diabetes. During her testimony last week in a hearing in Chicago, Clara said, "There are things I don't like about diabetes. I have to put a one inch needle into my skin to connect my insulin pump. I don't like pricks or shots. I don't like having high blood sugar and not being able to eat. I don't like going low and fainting." She continued, "I would like to find a cure because finding a cure will help make America and the rest of the world not worry about diabetes."

Most scientists agree that embryonic stem cell research offers the greatest hope to

patients like Clara. There are limitations on the usefulness of adult stem cells when compared to embryonic stem cells. For example, there are no adult stem cells in the pancreas. That means that adult stem cell research will be inadequate in helping Clara or any other patient who are hoping for a cure for diabetes.

While it is important to continue working with adult stem cells, it is vital to fund the research using embryonic stem cells. We do a grave disservice to millions of children and adults living with serious illness, as well as the millions who will develop these conditions in the future, by prohibiting promising research.

This bill would lift the arbitrary restrictions and permit funding of cell lines regardless of when they were created. Federal funding guidelines assure that research will meet ethical standards and allow advancements to be made as quickly as possible. As Dr. Steven Teitelbaum of Washington University in St. Louis said, "This is not a contest between adult and embryonic stem cells. This is a contest between us as a society and disease.

I urge my colleagues to vote 'yes' on this bipartisan legislation, H.R. 810."